Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

3582

SECRET

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 100-5-55

(Supersedes NIE 100-54)

IMPLICATIONS OF GROWING NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES FOR THE COMMUNIST BLOC AND THE FREE WORLD

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 14 June 1955. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; and the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC. The Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of its jurisdiction.

DOCUMENT NO. 1
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE:
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE 2-6-81 REVIEWER: 372044

9
COPY NO.
THE HON HAROLD STASSEN

SECRET

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

DISSEMINATION NOTICE

1. This estimate was disseminated by the Central Intelligence Agency. This copy is for the information and use of the recipient indicated on the front cover and of persons under his jurisdiction on a need to know basis. Additional essential dissemination may be authorized by the following officials within their respective departments:

a. Special Assistant to the Secretary for Intelligence, for the Department of State
b. Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, for the Department of the Army
c. Director of Naval Intelligence, for the Department of the Navy
d. Director of Intelligence, USAF, for the Department of the Air Force
e. Deputy Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff, for the Joint Staff
f. Director of Intelligence, AEC, for the Atomic Energy Commission
g. Assistant to the Director, FBI, for the Federal Bureau of Investigation
h. Assistant Director for Collection and Dissemination, CIA, for any other Department or Agency

2. This copy may be retained, or destroyed by burning in accordance with applicable security regulations, or returned to the Central Intelligence Agency by arrangement with the Office of Collection and Dissemination, CIA.

3. When an estimate is disseminated overseas, the overseas recipients may retain it for a period not in excess of one year. At the end of this period, the estimate should either be destroyed, returned to the forwarding agency, or permission should be requested of the forwarding agency to retain it in accordance with IAC–D–69/2, 22 June 1953.

WARNING

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

DISTRIBUTION:
White House
National Security Council
Department of State
Department of Defense
Operations Coordinating Board
Atomic Energy Commission
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

IMPLICATIONS OF GROWING NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES FOR THE COMMUNIST BLOC AND THE FREE WORLD

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the effects of increasing nuclear capabilities on public attitudes and national policies in the Communist and non-Communist world (excluding the US).

ASSUMPTION

That no international agreement is reached to restrict or prohibit the production, testing, or use of nuclear weapons.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The most important effect in non-Communist countries of growing nuclear capabilities is to diminish the willingness of most governments and peoples to incur risks of war. A second effect is to increase public desire for a reduction of international tensions, and for the use of all possible means, even including those which the governments themselves may consider ill-advised, to work towards a settlement with the Communist powers. Finally, there is increased public pressure on governments to find some means of international disarmament, and especially some means of insuring that nuclear weapons will not be used in war. *(Para. 18)*

2. Evidence from the USSR indicates that the Soviet rulers are well aware of the nature and the power of nuclear weapons, which had generally been minimized publicly in Stalin's time. We believe that they are deeply concerned by the implication of these weapons. US nuclear capabilities almost certainly constitute a major deterrent to overt military aggression by the USSR. *(Paras. 13–14, 22)*

3. As nuclear capabilities further increase, and the possibilities of mutual devastation grow, the tendencies to caution and compromise presently discernible in non-Communist countries will probably be accentuated. Aversion to risks of war, pressures for disarmament, and fear of general war, will almost certainly be more marked than now. The difficulties of conducting policy against such adversaries as the Communist leaders will probably be increased, and the chances may become greater of a weakening of the non-Communist position by successive concessions. At the same time the Soviet leaders themselves, because of their recognition of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons, will still almost certainly be concerned not to

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

pursue aggressive actions to the point of incurring substantial risk of general war. *(Para. 26)*

4. We believe that the allies of the US, and especially the major allies, will continue in the alliance despite the increase of nuclear capabilities, at least as long as general war does not appear imminent. If general war appeared imminent or actually occurred, their policies would depend in large measure on the course of events. Some of the allies might have no choice, and could not remain uninvolved even if they wished to do so. Some might consider the issues at stake insufficiently important to risk general war, and might therefore declare themselves neutral at an early stage of the crisis. Some governments might estimate that full-scale nuclear war between the US and the USSR would end with complete or near-complete destruction of the war-making potential of both powers, and therefore that neutrality might be both a safe and a profitable position. If events developed in such a way as to confront governments with a clear and immediate choice between nuclear devastation and neutrality, we believe that practically all would choose neutrality. *(Paras. 27, 30)*

5. As its nuclear capabilities grow, the USSR will have a greatly increased capability to inflict destruction, particularly on the US itself. Nevertheless, the Soviet leaders will probably still not be confident that they could attack the US with nuclear weapons without exposing the USSR to an even more devastating counterblow. We believe, therefore, that the USSR will continue to try to avoid substantial risks of general war despite the increase of its nuclear capabilities. However, as these capabilities grow, Soviet leaders may come to estimate that the US, because of fear for itself or for its allies, or because of pressure by its allies, will be increasingly deterred from initiating full-scale nuclear war. They may therefore come to believe that local wars will be less likely than at present to expand into general war, and thus that superior Bloc military capabilities in certain local areas can be exercised without substantial risk of provoking general war. *(Para. 31)*

DISCUSSION

I. CURRENT OPINION CONCERNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

6. During the past year public concern about nuclear weapons has increased considerably in most of the non-Communist world. The enormous explosive power of the newer types of weapons and the lethal character of radioactive fall-out have been brought vividly to attention by popular and scientific publicity accompanying recent tests. Depictions of nuclear war are dismaying; in addition, well-qualified scientists frequently issue warnings of the biologic and genetic perils which might arise from continued experimentation with nuclear weapons. The public has been the recipient of accurate information which is disquieting, and of misinformation which is alarming. Its reaction has varied in intensity from time to time and from country to country, but a few clear and powerful trends have emerged among the people of nearly all the principal countries of the non-Communist world.

7. The first of these is an increased fear of war. This feeling is general rather than specific; it is fear of war in principle rather than panic arising from a clear and present danger. Most people appear to believe that general

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

war is not likely within the next few years. However, their aversion to war, heightened as it is by consciousness of the appalling power of nuclear weapons, creates abnormally strong opposition to courses of action which present even a minor risk of war, and produces support for courses of action which offer even a hope of peace, however illusory. If general war became imminent these popular feelings in the non-Communist nations could be a major factor in influencing government action.

8. A second trend in mass opinion, vigorously exploited by the Communists, is one of growing opposition to the manufacture, testing, and use of nuclear weapons. According to US-sponsored polls in Western Europe, an overwhelming majority of the people favor an East-West agreement prohibiting the manufacture of all nuclear weapons.[1] There is even significant popular support for vague proposals to "ban the bomb," without adequate guarantees that the USSR would observe the ban. In West Germany and Italy the poll showed a substantial minority of opinion against the employment of nuclear weapons even in the assumed circumstance that invasion and occupation of the country could be prevented in no other way, and that the weapons would be used only against military forces. The polls also indicate that there is little public recognition in Western Europe of the importance of nuclear weapons to Western defense concepts, and little realization that the military plans of NATO contemplate use of such weapons.

9. In opposing the use of nuclear weapons, little distinction is made between "tactical" and "strategic" employment. There is a great deal of feeling that the next combat use of nuclear weapons, of whatever size and for whatever purpose, would forthwith break through inhibitions which now exist and which might otherwise prevent any use of such weapons. Moreover, there is a feeling that employment of nuclear weapons would carry grave risk of turning a small war into general war. This feeling seems to be based in part on the ground that use of a weapon of such unprecedented power would surely provoke retaliation and counter-retaliation on an ascending scale. It also seems to stem from some of the more publicized statements concerning modern warfare, which give the impression that any limitation of the scope or area of air attacks would be militarily unsound.

10. Together with the broad trends of public opinion concerning nuclear weapons, more complex and sophisticated views are held by individuals or groups in official, scientific, military, and generally better-informed circles. Perhaps the most widespread of these opinions is that general war will never again occur, because the destructive force of nuclear weapons has made it so obviously unprofitable. A variant of this is the idea that even if general war should occur, nuclear weapons would not be used because the combatants would not be disposed to invoke the almost unlimited destruction that their use would entail. Contrary views are also freely expressed. It is argued that nuclear weapons, destructive as they are, now constitute merely another item in the arsenal of a military establishment, and must be considered as "conventional" implements of war. It is pointed out that general war is as apt to happen by miscalculation as by design, and that considerations of profitability may not be the decisive factor in determining its occurrence.

11. The deterrent value of nuclear weapons is generally recognized by the better-informed, even by those who do not think that it is so great as to make general war out of the question. It is widely believed that the overwhelming nuclear superiority of the US in the past has been an important deterrent to the aggressive tendencies of the USSR, and thus an important protection to the liberties of free nations. As Soviet nuclear capabilities grow the picture changes, but Western nuclear capabilities continue to be considered as a deterrent to major Soviet military aggression. These views constitute an important check on the uncritical "ban the bomb" senti-

[1] These polls were taken in late 1954 and early 1955 in the UK, France, West Germany, and Italy. They were conducted by competent agencies, and gave results considered to be accurate within a margin of plus or minus six percent.

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

ments which are assiduously nourished by Communist propaganda. We do not believe that official or educated opinion in any major Western nation presently favors an outlawing of nuclear weapons without adequate guarantees. It is probable that most informed opinion is tending to the conclusion that control of nuclear weapons by inspection is technically impossible, and that guarantees to be effective would have to be of a different nature.

12. The intensity of public feeling about nuclear weapons, and the extent of knowledge, differ greatly in various parts of the non-Communist world. In Japan feelings were aroused almost to hysteria at the time of the accidental fall-out on a Japanese fishing vessel from the Bikini tests; in no other country of the world have there been so many pronouncements — some highly emotional, some cooler and more rational — against the existence and the testing and the use of nuclear weapons. In the UK there has been profound concern, much well-informed debate, and, almost uniquely in the western world, a definite attempt at guidance from the government, offered by Sir Winston Churchill himself. In the other countries of Western Europe agitation has been somewhat less, and the level of debate much lower, than in the UK. Among the neutralist countries, India has exhibited the greatest degree of concern on the subject of nuclear weapons, though this has been more evident on official levels than among the general public. It is particularly notable that vigorous condemnation of nuclear weapons in India has involved more manifestations of feeling against the US than against the USSR.

13. In the Sino-Soviet Bloc there has until lately been comparatively little diffusion of information about the nature of nuclear weapons. Recently, however, the Soviet regime has begun to make some information available, at first for a limited, largely military, audience but later to the general public. The government has not yet undertaken the intensive publicity program that would appear to be necessary for an effective civil defense effort. In Communist China, radio broadcasts on nuclear subjects increased greatly during the early months of 1955; these broadcasts emphasized the feasibility of defense against nuclear weapons and belittled the effect of such weapons on the outcome of a war. Most of the propaganda, however, was related to the campaign to get 400,000,000 signatures to a petition for the banning of nuclear weapons. It is unlikely that many Chinese will understand the petition that they sign. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that in the Communist countries the people fear nuclear weapons, insofar as they understand what such weapons are. It should also be noted that the Communist rulers, within as well as outside their own empires, have given publicity to discussions of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and to descriptions of the advantages to be derived from such uses if the "capitalist war-mongers" can be restrained. However, within the entire Bloc the effectiveness of popular attitudes in influencing governmental policies is slight.

14. Public discussion of nuclear weapons by the highest Communist authorities has been comparatively scanty. During the Stalin period the military significance of these weapons was generally played down, probably because the Communist rulers initially desired to minimize the importance of a weapon they did not possess and subsequently wanted to deny that the possession of greater nuclear capabilities gave the US a decisive military advantage. In March 1954, however, Malenkov declared in a notable speech that a full-scale nuclear war would lead to the destruction of civilization, both Communist and non-Communist. This view has since been officially and emphatically repudiated by the Communist leadership. The Soviet leaders now assert that full-scale nuclear war would involve the destruction only of capitalist civilization, while Communism would survive even though badly battered. Nevertheless, Malenkov's remarks were the first public acknowledgment by Soviet leaders of the terrible power of the new weapons. It may be that their own weapons tests played some part in this expressed attitude. We believe that the Soviet rulers, though not the Soviet people, are now well

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

acquainted with the nature of nuclear weapons, and are deeply concerned about their implications.

II. INFLUENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITIES ON CURRENT NATIONAL POLICIES

15. The influence of nuclear capabilities on current national policies is best considered in the context of two other factors which distinguish the present era of international relations. The first of these lies in the character of the Communist movement and of the rulers of the Sino-Soviet Bloc. Professing as they do a belief in the eventual triumph of Communism throughout the world, and in their mission to strive toward this triumph, the Communist leaders characterize their relation to the non-Communist world as one of unremitting and permanent hostility. Coexistence can be for them only temporary; aggression is a duty when it can be undertaken with good chance of success. When one party to a quarrel feels this way, the procedures of adjustment and compromise between nations become difficult and even dangerous; conflict is normal, stability is only temporary, but there still remains the question of what form the conflict may take.

16. The second factor is the bi-polarization of world power — the division of the world into two camps, with almost no nation of military consequence left outside the alignments. As a result of this division there is a great rigidity and lack of room for maneuver in international relations. There is no third force of sufficient strength to manipulate and perhaps alter the balance of international power. The disputes of lesser states have come increasingly to involve the conflicting interests of the two great power centers. The danger that small wars will grow into general war is greater than it was when power was more evenly distributed in the world, and restraint on the part of the great powers is the only effective influence which may act to prevent a war of limited objectives from becoming a general war.

17. To a considerable degree the existence of nuclear weapons tends to accentuate the bi-polarization of power, for no nation or group of nations can pretend to constitute a strong third force without possessing such weapons in quantity, together with adequate delivery capabilities. However, the primary significance of these weapons is not that they have shaped the structure of the current international situation, but rather that they have enormously increased the potential destructiveness of the wars which are likely to arise out of that situation. From this fact flow practically all the influences which nuclear weapons exert on national policies at the present day.

18. The most important effect of the nuclear weapons situation on the current national policies of most non-Communist nations is to diminish the willingness of their governments and peoples to incur risks of war, even though it is virtually impossible to protect the interests of free nations in the present world without running such risks. A second effect is to increase public desire for a reduction of international tensions, and for the use of all possible means, even including those which the governments themselves may consider ill-advised, to work towards a general settlement with the Communist powers. Finally, there is increased public pressure on governments to find some means of disarmament, and especially some means of insuring that nuclear weapons will not be used in combat. Desire for disarmament is of course no new thing; it is intensified and magnified at present, however, by the pervading fear of nuclear weapons.

19. These considerations do not, of course, hold true in equal measure for all countries. For some — Nationalist China, South Korea, and perhaps others — they do not seem to hold true at all. The great question, however, is whether they operate on the Communist rulers to approximately the same degree that they do on non-Communist governments. We believe that both Soviet and Chinese Communist leaders desire to avoid substantial risks of general war, and that this desire arises in great measure from their recognition of significantly superior US nuclear capabilities and of the probable consequences of nuclear war-

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

fare to them. They probably also believe that under present circumstances overt military aggression over recognized national frontiers by substantial Soviet, Satellite, or Chinese Communist forces would present substantial risks of general war, and we therefore believe that they will avoid such aggression in the near future. It may be, however, that the Communist rulers do not to the same degree as non-Communist governments and peoples believe that small wars tend to expand. The Communist rulers also may count heavily on a diminished willingness of non-Communist governments and peoples to risk general war as a factor inhibiting the expansive tendency of small wars. We believe that such differences of view could hold grave dangers for the West.

20. Few current national policies are traceable exclusively to the existence of nuclear weapons. These include primarily changes in military equipment, organization, and doctrine. Most important are the USSR's manufacture of nuclear weapons, its creation of means for delivering these weapons against distant targets, and its efforts to construct a more effective air defense system. Along with this have come changes in the equipment and tactical doctrine of Soviet forces, largely for the purpose of adapting them to the requirements of nuclear warfare. With the same end in view the French are, for example, reducing the size and increasing the mobility of their ground divisions. The UK is devoting greatly increased attention to the problem of defending the British Isles against air attack, and for the first time has given the largest share of military appropriations to the RAF.

21. A notable act of policy directly related to the nuclear situation is the British decision to make their own thermonuclear weapons. This decision has had the approval of the leaders of both parties, and of the nation generally. Churchill explained that possession of these weapons constituted the most important deterrent to an attack by the USSR on the United Kingdom, and that if such an attack was to be averted it would almost certainly have to be primarily through such deterrent force rather than through the weapons and techniques of defense. Secondly, he declared that the UK could not expect to exert much influence upon the policies of other countries if it remained dependent for its defense upon the deterrent power of US weapons. Finally, he remarked that while the British could rely on the US as an ally if war came, they could not be certain that the war plans of the US would include such an employment of thermonuclear weapons as would be most effective for the defense of the British Isles.

22. We believe it virtually certain that US nuclear capabilities constitute a major deterrent to overt military aggression by the USSR. Apart from this we cannot estimate with confidence the broader effects of the nuclear situation on current Soviet policies. It does not seem likely that US nuclear capabilities are primarily responsible for the present conciliatory tone of Soviet policy or for such manifestations as the agreement to withdraw from Austria. We believe, however, though it is not demonstrable, that the Soviet leaders are seriously concerned about the prospect of a Western Germany armed at some future date not only with conventional forces but with nuclear capabilities as well.

23. On 10 May 1955 the USSR submitted new disarmament proposals which departed from some of its previous positions on the subject. Soviet motivation in advancing these proposals is probably highly complex, and we cannot yet estimate whether there is a direct relation between them and Soviet concern over possible nuclear warfare.

III. PROBABLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

24. If the nuclear capabilities of the US and the USSR continue to develop along present lines, and adequate defenses are not devised, each nation will acquire weapons, carriers, and techniques sufficient to destroy progressively all the important strengths of the other. The exact degree to which such destruction might be carried would be related to the courses of action which each side felt compelled to prevent or frustrate. In a general war situation such courses of action to be prevented or frustrated would probably be initially comprehensive for both sides even if dissimilar in

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

many respects. Therefore destruction could be carried as far as to eliminate progressively the source of all important courses of action by both sides. Such destruction could kill a large proportion of both populations, destroy the principal cities, communications systems and administrative apparatus, and at least temporarily put an end to coherent and organized national existence. This destruction could be extended to the allies and satellites of both major powers. However, if one side should be able rapidly to prevent or frustrate the most critical actions of the other the overall destruction to be expected to both sides might be reduced materially.

25. We do not undertake to estimate, in this paper, how far the defense systems of the two countries and their associates might be able to cut down this gross capability for mutual destruction. Some competent authorities predict that an attack by either side on the other would inevitably result in the destruction of both, regardless of defense systems or the degree of surprise attained in the initial operation. If such a view became generally accepted nuclear war would appear to be almost out of the question, for no nation is likely to seek inevitable destruction. We think it much more likely, however, that there will always be a considerable element of doubt about the matter in the US and the USSR if not in smaller countries. Certainty of destruction is unlikely to be accepted. There will probably always appear on each side to be a chance, even if only a slim one, of surviving as an effective national entity while achieving the destruction of the enemy. It appears inevitable, however, that both the US and the USSR would have to expect a degree of devastation unparalleled in modern times, and that lesser nations involved in the conflict might have to expect that if the US or USSR considered them important they would suffer something approaching total destruction of national existence. Over the very long term, the trend of weapons development will probably further sharpen the advantage of tactical surprise.

26. Under such circumstances the public and governmental attitudes described above and evident today would probably be intensified. Aversion to risks of war, pressures for disarmament and for compromises and settlements, and fear of general war, would almost certainly be more marked then than now. The difficulties of conducting policy against such adversaries as the Soviet leaders would probably grow, and the chances increase of a weakening of the non-Communist position by successive concessions. At the same time the Soviet leaders themselves, because of their recognition of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons will still almost certainly be concerned not to pursue aggressive actions to the point of incurring substantial risk of general war.

27. We believe that the allies of the US, and especially the major allies, will continue in the alliance, at least as long as general war does not appear imminent. Their reasons for doing so would be: to keep their interests under the protection of US power, to contribute to a countervailing force sufficient to deter the Soviets from launching war, and to be in a position to exert influence on the policies of the US and of other members of the alliance. Under the new circumstances they would probably try to increase their influence over US policies. Many of them would even more vigorously than at present counsel caution, urge compromise, and advise the avoidance of risk, particularly if their own vital interests were not involved. They would be aware that the US itself was for the first time exposed to major devastation if it became involved in general war, and they might consider that the US would therefore be somewhat easier to influence in the direction of caution than it had sometimes previously appeared to be.

28. This disposition to caution would be modified if the conviction grew that the USSR and the US both so clearly recognized the disastrousness of general war that they would be constrained to avoid it even if they became involved in localized conflict. In these circumstances there would be a lessening of the fear of general war and a much greater flexibility in international relations. There would be greater willingness to accept the

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

risks of small wars, especially by the countries whose interests were directly involved. It is conceivable that in time there might even be a willingness to accept limited employment of nuclear weapons in such wars, if it were virtually certain that the risk of general war developing was negligible.

29. Another development which could alter the international situation would be the acquisition of significant nuclear capabilities by a number of nations in addition to the US and the USSR. The British are already building up their strength in this respect. The Canadians, West Germans, French, and some other nations clearly have the scientific and engineering capacity to do so, although the effort would be costly. It is thus possible that in a decade or more nuclear capabilities may be much more widely distributed among nations than they are at present. The results of such a development cannot be predicted. It appears almost certain, however, that the dominating influence of the US and the USSR would be somewhat reduced.

30. Whether the allies of the US would remain allies if general war became imminent or actually occurred is uncertain. The events leading to war might be such that some of the allies had no choice, and could not remain uninvolved even if they wished to do so. Or they might be such that most of the allies considered the issues at stake insufficiently important to risk general war, and therefore declared themselves neutral at an early stage of the crisis. Some governments might estimate that full-scale nuclear war between the US and the USSR would end with complete or near-complete destruction of the war-making potential of both powers, and therefore that neutrality might be both a safe and a profitable position. If events developed in such a way as to confront governments with a clear and immediate choice between nuclear devastation and neutrality, we believe that practically all would choose neutrality.

31. As nuclear capabilities grow, the USSR will have a greatly increased capability to inflict destruction, particularly on the US itself. Nevertheless, the Soviet leaders will probably still not be confident that they could attack the US with nuclear weapons without exposing the USSR to an even more devastating counterblow. We believe, therefore, that the USSR will continue to try to avoid substantial risks of general war despite the increase of its nuclear capabilities. However, as these capabilities grow, Soviet leaders may come to estimate that the US, because of fear for itself or for its allies, or because of pressure by its allies, will be increasingly deterred from initiating full-scale nuclear war. They may therefore come to believe that local wars will be less likely than at present to expand into general war, and thus that superior Bloc military capabilities in certain local areas can be exercised without substantial risk of provoking general war.

32. In diplomatic negotiations the Soviet leaders will almost certainly try to take advantage of the increased urgency with which Western governments, pressed by their better-informed public opinion, will strive to escape nuclear war through peaceful solutions. We believe it likely that in a situation of sharp and general international crisis the USSR would seek to undermine Western determination by reminders of the consequences of the employment of nuclear weapons. We believe it unlikely, however, that the USSR would make open and direct threats of nuclear attack since the Soviet leaders would probably fear that such tactics might bring about a situation in which general war would become unavoidable, and they might even fear that they would provoke a preventive attack by the US.

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6

Declassified and Approved For Release @ 50-Yr 2013/08/06 : CIA-RDP79R01012A006400010015-6